

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

February 24, 2011

The City Council Transportation Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met at 5:30 p.m. in the Municipal Building Council Chambers on the 24th day of February, 2011, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted in the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and the Norman Public Library at 225 North Webster 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councilmembers Butler, Cubberley, Kovach,
Chairman Quinn

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Ms. Danielle Comer, OU Student
Mr. Stephen Koranda, Executive Director, Norman
Convention and Visitors Bureau
Mr. Matt Mueller, OU Student
Mr. Doug Myers, OU Parking and Transportation
Administrator
Ms. Janice Oak, Progressive Independence
Mr. Cody Ponder, Grants Specialist II for OU
Ms. Linda Price, Revitalization Manager
Mr. Evan Stair, Executive Director, Passenger Rail
Oklahoma
Mr. Wayne Wickman, OU Transit Operations
Manager
Mr. Nathan Wood, Norman Convention and Visitors
Bureau
Ms. Syndi Runyon, Administrative Technician IV

DISCUSSION REGARDING CART RIDERSHIP REPORT INCLUDING SAFERIDE AND EXTENDED SERVICE.

Mr. Doug Myers, OU Parking and Transportation Administrator, said the Norman Arts Council was looking for ways to save money and will no longer be paying for the Second Friday trolley service.

Mr. Myers said CART continues to worry about federal funds being reduced and becoming a part of the Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority (COPTA) as a Large Urban Area, which would not allow CART to use federal funds for operational expenses, only capital expenses. He said being designated a Small Urban Area allowed CART to use up to 80% of federal funds for operating expenses. He said the reduction would equal \$650,000 to \$700,000, which would drastically impact service in Norman. He said it could result in reducing hours and days of service; eliminating routes; eliminating CART access; and cause employee layoffs. He asked that the City of Norman, at least, continue with the current level of funding for CART in FYE 2012. Councilmember Cubberley asked if CART would be affected in FYE 12 and Mr. Myers said no. He said he is traveling to Washington, D.C., in March to ask for support in using federal funds for operational expenses. He said COTPA would also be negatively affected by the changes. Councilmember Butler asked if CART would be operational with COTPA and Mr. Myers said yes.

Chairman Quinn asked how CART made it through the snow storms and Mr. Myers said the busses did fine. He said CART announced service changes on the City's "weather updates" on the website. Councilmember Kovach asked if CART received any complaints regarding blocked sidewalks or

Americans with Disability Act (ADA) problems and Mr. Myers said CART received very few complaints and getting through the snow to the bus stops was a challenge.

Items submitted for the record

1. Cleveland Area Rapid Transit Ridership Totals for the Months of October 2010, November 2010, and December 2010
2. Flyer entitled, "City Transportation Committee Update," dated February 24, 2011

UPDATE OF A METRO AREA COMMUNITY AWARENESS PROJECT TO BE HELD IN MAY 2011 CONCERNING A COMMUTER RAIL SYSTEM.

Chairman Quinn said, in January, the Committee received a presentation regarding the Trinity Railway Express offering to loan Oklahoma City three linked rail cars for a Commuter Rail Demonstration Project to demonstrate why Central Oklahoma needs passenger rail service. He said part of that project was to include displaying the cars in Norman overnight with possible rides to Oklahoma City. He said that project has been put on hold due to budget restraints in all cities involved in the project.

PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION ON HOUSE BILL 1686 REGARDING THE CREATION OF AN EASTERN FLYER PASSENGER RAIL DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE TO STUDY AND DEVELOP AN EXPANSION OF CONVENTIONAL PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE AS WELL AS HIGH SPEED PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE FROM TULSA TO OKLAHOMA CITY.

Mr. Evan Stair, Executive Director of Passenger Rail Oklahoma, said he is working on expanding passenger rail service from Oklahoma to Wichita, and Kansas City, Kansas. He said the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) is handling the process, which has slowed due to the operations study process. In the interim, he said Oklahoma is working on passenger rail service to Tulsa. He said he is working with the legislature on a "Public Private Partnership" (P3) to put together an Eastern Flyer Passenger Rail Development Task Force. He said House Bill 1686 has been introduced to create the Task Force and will provide a comprehensive look at conventional and high speed rail service between Oklahoma City and Tulsa using P3 formulas.

Mr. Stair said a P3 is a contractual agreement formed between public and private sector partners, which allows for more private sector partnership into the project. He said agreements usually involve a government agency contracting with a private company to renovate, construct, operate, maintain, and/or manage a facility or system. He said the P3 is endorsed by National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL).

Mr. Stair said the Task Force would be commissioned to look at state owned rail property. He said Oklahoma owns 869 miles of rail infrastructure with 100 of those miles between Oklahoma City and Sapulpa and the balance between Sapulpa and downtown Tulsa is owned by Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad. He said it will be a strategic advantage to Oklahoma to own that rail. In 2001, Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) estimated a cost of \$110 million to upgrade the rails from Oklahoma City to Tulsa; however, that may have doubled over time.

Mr. Stair said, since there is virtually no federal funding available and no funds available in the State's High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program, the State has to look at other means of funding. He said one eastbound and one westbound passenger rail service to Tulsa would cost an estimated \$2.2 million per frequency per year. He said it would not be high speed rail which runs at approximately 80 miles per hour, but would be more practical.

Mr. Stair said the Eastern Flyer Rail Development Task Force members could consist of members appointed by the Governor; Lt. Governor; ODOT Director; Commerce Department; Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ); Tourism and Recreation; House Speaker; and the Senate President Pro-Tem, as well as a citizen from Tulsa, Oklahoma City, or another City in between. He said State agencies would provide data to the Task Force such as reports, studies, research, etc. He said he believes that in order to get a good product Oklahoma needs to have across the board coverage on the Task Force. He said the final report from the Task Force will be due December 12, 2012, and the Task Force will dissolve on February 1, 2013.

Mr. Stair asked the Norman City Council to support HB1686 by resolution, which he would draft and Chairman Quinn said he would be happy to present a draft to Council for review.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "HB1686 Eastern Flyer Task Force, Public Private Partnership, New Approach to Passenger Rail," dated February 24, 2011
2. House Bill 1686 as introduced

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION.

Councilmember Butler attended an Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) meeting and the Transportation Policy Committee met immediately afterwards and voted to add a whole series of projects to the Encompass 2035 Transportation Plan. She said they modeled plans to bridge gaps in the whole regional road system where congestion was a problem and one model was to four lane Lindsey Street through the University of Oklahoma (OU) Campus area. She told them that project was not a priority in Norman and they told her adding it to the long range plan provided an opportunity for federal funds if Norman decided to pursue that project in the future. She said the Oklahoma City Outerloop Project is no longer in the plan because they discovered the project would increase congestion slightly.

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.